

REMARKS

On page 2 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 1-2, 7-10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being unpatentable over Pall, United States Patent No. 4,228,012 (hereinafter Pall '012).

Reconsideration is requested.

Independent Claims 1 and 12 have been amended to include the subject matter of previously presented claims 2 and 3. Additionally, Claims 2 and 3 have been canceled and Claims 4, 5 and 8 have been amended to now depend from Claim 1. Additionally, independent Claims 1 and 12 have been amended to recite at least one supporting projection (27) extending vertically from the end plate (30). No new matter has been added. The supporting projections (27) are disclosed in the present specification at Paragraphs 0051 and 0073 and Figs. 4-6. No new matter has been added. Pall '012 does not disclose (or render obvious) the use of an interlocking bayonet system for filtration devices in combination with supporting projections to assist in vertical stacking of filtration elements, and therefore does not disclose each and every element of amended claims 1 and 12 (or any dependent claims thereof). It is therefore requested that the §102(b) rejection be withdrawn.

On page 3 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Pall '012, taken together with Pall, United States Patent No. 3,690,606 (hereinafter "Pall '606).

Reconsideration is requested.

Claim 11 depends from claim 1, which has been amended as described above. As previously discussed, Pall '012 does not disclose or render obvious the use of an interlocking bayonet system in combination with supporting projections to assist in vertical stacking of filtration elements. The addition of the elements 24, 25 and 27 in amended claims 1 and 12 eliminates overcomes the 103(a) rejection of claim 11 and therefore it is requested that the §103 rejection of claim 11 based on Pall '012 and Pall '606 be withdrawn.

On page 3 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 3-6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Pall '012, taken together with any one of Reed, United States Patent No. 5,141,637 (hereinafter "Reed"); Diemer United States Patent

No. 6,306,298 (hereinafter Diemer) or Nuzman, United States Patent No. 4,133,379 (hereinafter "Nuzman").

Reconsideration is requested.

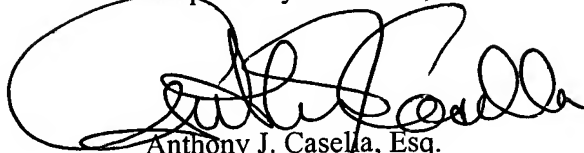
Claims 1 and 12 have been amended to include the subject matter of original claims 2 and 3. Additionally, independent Claims 1 and 12 have been amended to recite at least one supporting projection (27) extending vertically from the end plate (30). No new matter has been added. In light of the above discussed amendments, Applicant respectfully submit that the §103(a) rejection based on Pall '012 taken together with any one of Reed, Deimer or Nuzman is the only remaining rejection in the current office action, and the remaining issues associated therewith will be discussed below.

As discussed above, Pall '012 does not describe an interlocking bayonet system in combination with supporting projections to assist in vertical stacking of filtration elements. While Reed, Deimer and Nuzman disclose systems that can be used to link a series of filter elements, none of the cited prior art references disclose or render obvious the present claimed invention. Specifically, none of the cited prior art recites an interlocking bayonet system in combination with a series of supporting projections to assist in vertical stacking of filtration elements as called for in the currently amended claims. Deimer discloses projections that extend horizontally from the filter element, these projections are designed to lock into a corresponding hollow cylindrical hollow in an adjoining filter element. These projections differ from the supporting projection in the present invention, because they extend horizontally (see Fig. 9 of Deimer), whereas the supporting projections in the present claimed invention extend vertically (see Figs. 4-6 of the present application). Further, the projections disclosed in Deimer assist in the locking of the bayonet system, whereas the supporting projections in the present claimed invention assist in supporting the weight of the stacked filter elements.

Based upon the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that amended claims 1 and 4-12 are allowable over the prior art and that the present application is in proper form for allowance.

Favorable consideration and early allowance is respectfully requested and earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony J. Casella'.

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